

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph beginning on page 6, line 7 is amended as follows:

Many choices of materials to form barriers are known in the art. One type of barrier layer that is used ~~in~~ is formed from metal oxide ceramic compounds. See Verhaar et al., above. Layers formed from such compounds are used as both etch stop and diffusion barriers. They are removed after layering with chemical etchant processes. The difficulty with using metal oxide ceramic compounds as a barrier layer arises in deposition of the material. In sputter deposition, the targets are expensive to provide, and it has been found that sputter depositing does not provide adequate step coverage for increasingly small contact and via openings.

The paragraph beginning on page 11, line 9 is amended as follows:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a contact utilizing a barrier layer as an etch stop barrier.

The paragraph beginning on page 11, line 15 is amended as follows:

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a reaction chamber containing a silicon substrate on which is formed a barrier layer according to the inventive process.